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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001298

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ECIN](#) [PK](#) [NP](#) [BG](#) [IN](#) [SAARC](#)

SUBJECT: INDIA SAYS SAARC STILL ALIVE, SUMMIT HINGES ON NEPAL/BANGLADESH ACTIONS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 1224

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 826

[1](#)C. 04 NEW DELHI 7426

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt. Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

- [1](#)1. (C) Summary: In contrast with the predominant view in the Indian media that by opting out of the Dhaka Summit, India dealt a fatal blow
Prerequisites for a Summit

- [1](#)2. (C) Ashok recognized that India's decision to unilaterally cancel the February 6-7 South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARF
SIPDIS about the Dhaka Summit. In a more sober view of Bangladesh than some of his MEA colleagues, Ashok empathized with the effort the F
- [1](#)3. (C) PolCouns underlined our interest in the scheduling of an early SAARC Summit as a means to build confidence and further regional inte
The Joint Secretary noted that Nepal weighed more heavily in the GOI decision to not go to Dhaka. As far as making a third attempt at the t
- [1](#)4. (C) Reiterating what the Foreign Secretary said in his February 2 announcement that the Prime Minister would not go to Dhaka, Ashok insi
Confident in SAARC's potential, he underlined his previously enunciated view that it is time for SAARC to move from meetings and studies to p
- [1](#)5. (C) Ashok conveyed a positive line on SAARC just days after Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran in his February 14 speech on India's South Asi
SAFTA Not Yet Derailed

- [1](#)6. (C) His enthusiasm for the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) unfazed by neighborhood developments, Ashok was nearly as upbeat about the
- [1](#)7. (C) Even the potential sticking point of Pakistan's hesitation in granting MFN status to India did not appear to Ashok as insurmountable
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